

# Profligate Hearts Go Down at Dundee



## Dundee 2 Hearts 1

**Ladbrokes Premiership, Saturday 30th September 2017 – Dens Park**

Hearts returned to a venue that has haunted them for more than thirty years and again suffered anguish as they lost a goal in the third minute of stoppage time to lose to Dundee.

More than 2,000 Hearts fans headed to Dens Park, scene of Hearts infamous last day capitulation of season 1985/86. They gave a particularly warm welcome to striker Kyle Lafferty who admitted this week that he has an addiction to gambling.

One may argue Hearts Head Coach Craig Levein took something of a gamble himself when he named 16-year-old Harry Cochrane in his starting line-up. Cochrane replaced the injured Don Cowie while Rafal Grzelak also made way from the team that drew with Partick Thistle last week. Lafferty came back into the starting line-up.

Backed by the vociferous Maroon Army, Hearts began well enough with Kyle Lafferty attempting a half-volley from 20 yards which didn't trouble Dees keeper Bain.

Just seven minutes in, however, and there was the first indication of how the afternoon would go for the visitors. Defender Aaron Hughes was forced to leave the field because of injury. His replacement was Prince Buaben, the former Dundee United player who was afforded a 'warm welcome' from the home support.

This early disruption seemed to affect Hearts as Dundee

dominated much of the first half, although Jamie Walker almost gave Hearts the lead when Bain's clearance came off the attacking midfielder and went just wide.

Dundee should have taken the lead after 15 minutes when O'Dea headed over the bar before Spence had a chance from inside the Hearts penalty box but pulled his shot wide.

Hearts were playing second fiddle and Dundee got the goal they deserved a minute before half-time when Waddell headed home Holt's corner kick with the Hearts defence posted AWOL.

### **Half-time Dundee 1 Hearts 0**

Deacon had a chance to double Dundee's advantage at the beginning of the second half when he eased away from Connor Randall but his shot on goal was straight at Hearts keeper Jon McLaughlin.

Levein was encouraging his men to get forward at every opportunity and Isma Goncalves showed enough strength to fire in a cross which deflected off a Dundee defender and spin towards goal. However, keeper Bain retrieved the situation.

With half an hour left, Hearts almost equalised. John Souttar, another former Dundee United man to get the 'treatment' from the home support, launched a ball towards Goncalves. The striker lashed in an effort on goal which crashed off the bar and Dundee escaped.

After Moussa missed a great chance to score a second goal for the home team, Hearts drew level with 19 minutes left. It was Moussa again who was the culprit, his woeful pass back being intercepted by Kyle Lafferty who took the ball round keeper Bain before slotting home. Joy at last for the travelling support.

Hearts were in the ascendancy now and Jamie Walker set off on a trademark run, playing a one-two with Connor Randall before

firing in a shot that was saved by Bain.

Walker came close again minutes later when he forced Bain into another fine save as Hearts searched for the winning goal. They almost got it when Walker set up Lafferty but the Northern Irishman's shot found the side netting.

If Hearts fans felt disappointed at the prospect of seeing their team get just a single point, this turned to despair three minutes into stoppage time when Dundee scored the winner. It was a similar scenario to Dundee's first goal. This time McGowan took the corner and again Waddell was allowed to head home the winner for the jubilant some side.

Craig Levein was understandably upset after the game. He told the official Hearst website:

*"I've experienced all emotions today. Losing the game in that manner is tragic, especially given the amount of effort we put in throughout the second half.*

*"It's the absolute basic of basics to not pick up men at corner kicks. We were excellent in the second half and should have had the game dead and buried and to shoot ourselves in the foot like that near the end was mind blowing.*

*"You can sit on the training ground and do things time after time. All the effort and hard work we put in going into this game went out of the window."*

*"We didn't play particularly well in the first half and never really found a rhythm or pattern to our play, but I changed our shape in the second half and we looked more comfortable," said Hearts Head Coach "We played as well as we have in that period since I've come back into the job and the worst I thought we'd take from the game was a draw."*

Not for the first time, Hearts suffered a late blow at Dens Park to lose to Dundee. The only thing one can say is that at

least the international break will give the Head Coach the opportunity to work on his side's weaknesses, even though some of his defenders will be away on World Cup duty.

**Dundee:** Bain, Holt, O'Dea, (Kerr, 65'), Kamara, Moussa (Leitch-Smith, 78'), O'Hara, McGowan, Deacon (El Bakhtaoui, 83'), Hendry, Spence, Waddell.

**Hearts:** McLaughlin, Souttar, Berra, Hughes (Buaben, 7'), Randall, Walker, Cochrane, (Milinkovic, 73') Callachan, M.Smith, Lafferty, Isma.

**Referee:** Steven MacLean

**Att:** 7,028

**Top Man:** Jamie Walker